

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus for sending and receiving an information signal to and from an electronic apparatus, comprising:

control-information acquiring means for acquiring, from said electronic apparatus, control information used for writing or reading product history information which includes at least one of purchase information and repair information concerning said electronic apparatus;

control-information identification/storage means for identifying the control information acquired by said control-information acquiring means and for storing the acquired control information therein; and

product-history updating means for updating the product history information stored in said electronic apparatus based on the control information stored in said control-information identification/storage means.

2. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the information signal is sent and received via a network system.

3. An information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said network system comprises an IEEE-1394

serial bus.

4. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising product-history storage means, wherein the product history information is read from said electronic apparatus based on the control information stored in said control-information identification/storage means, and is stored in said product-history storage means.

5. An information processing apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

apparatus-identification-number reading means for reading an apparatus identification number of said electronic apparatus from said electronic apparatus; and

central storage means for centrally storing the product history information stored in said product-history storage means together with the apparatus identification number of said electronic apparatus into an external electronic apparatus.

6. An information processing apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising product-history reading means for reading the product history information of said electronic apparatus from the product history information stored in said external electronic apparatus by said central

storage means based on the apparatus identification number of said electronic apparatus.

7. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the product history information is read from said electronic apparatus based on the control information, and said product history updating means comprises product-history display means for displaying the product history information.

8. An information processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said product history updating means comprises product-history input means for inputting new product history information concerning said electronic apparatus from an external source based on the product history information displayed by said product-history display means.

9. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said control-information acquiring means acquires the control information from said electronic apparatus when a communication connection with said electronic apparatus is established.

10. An information processing apparatus according to

claim 1, further comprising purchase-information determining means for determining whether the purchase information has already been written into said electronic apparatus,

wherein said product-history updating means does not write new purchase information into said electronic apparatus when said purchase-information determining means determines that the purchase information has already been written.

11. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said product-history updating means does not overwrite the repair information concerning said electronic apparatus.

12. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the purchase information comprises at least one of the date on which said electronic apparatus was purchased, the name, the address, and the telephone number of a store at which said electronic apparatus was purchased, and a digital signature of the store.

13. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the repair information comprises at least one of the date on which said electronic apparatus was repaired, the item and the type of repair, a contact number,

the name of a repair company, and information concerning a repair person.

14. An information processing method for use in an information processing apparatus for sending and receiving an information signal to and from an electronic apparatus, said information processing method comprising:

a control-information acquiring step of acquiring, from said electronic apparatus, control information used for writing or reading product history information which includes at least one of purchase information and repair information concerning said electronic apparatus;

a control-information identification/storage step of identifying the control information acquired in said control-information acquiring step and of storing the acquired control information therein; and

a product-history updating step of updating the product history information stored in said electronic apparatus based on the control information stored in said control-information identification/storage step.

15. A recording medium for storing a computer-readable program which controls an information processing apparatus for sending and receiving an information signal to and from an electronic apparatus, said computer-readable program

comprising:

a control-information acquiring step of acquiring, from said electronic apparatus, control information used for writing or reading product history information which includes at least one of purchase information and repair information concerning said electronic apparatus;

a control-information identification/storage step of identifying the control information acquired in said control-information acquiring step and of storing the acquired control information therein; and

a product-history updating step of updating the product history information stored in said electronic apparatus based on the control information stored in said control-information identification/storage step.

16. An information processing apparatus for sending and receiving an information signal to and from an external information processing apparatus, said information processing apparatus comprising:

control-information storage means for storing control information used for writing or reading product history information which includes at least one of purchase information and repair information concerning said information processing apparatus;

product-history storage means for storing the product

history information to be updated by an instruction from said external information processing apparatus; and

control-information sending means for sending the control information stored in said control-information storage means to said external information processing apparatus in response to a request from said external information processing apparatus.

17. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the control signal is sent and received via a network system.

18. An information processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said network system comprises an IEEE-1394 serial bus.

19. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, further comprising apparatus-identification-number storage means for storing an apparatus identification number of said information processing apparatus,

wherein, in response to an instruction from said external information processing apparatus, the apparatus identification number is read from said apparatus-identification-number storage means, and the product history information is read from said product-history storage means.

20. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, further comprising product-history display means for displaying the product history information stored in said product-history storage means.

21. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said control-information sending means sends the control information to said external information processing apparatus when a communication connection with said external information processing apparatus is established.

22. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the purchase information comprises at least one of the date on which said information processing apparatus was purchased, the name, the address, and the telephone number of a store at which said information processing apparatus was purchased, and a digital signature of the store.

23. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the repair information comprises at least one of the date on which said information processing apparatus was repaired, the item and the type of repair, a



contact number, the name of a repair company, and information concerning a repair person.

24. An information processing method for use in an information processing apparatus for sending and receiving an information signal to and from an external information processing apparatus, said information processing method comprising:

a control-information storage step of storing control information used for writing or reading product history information which includes at least one of purchase information and repair information concerning said information processing apparatus;

a product-history storage step of storing the product history information to be updated by an instruction from said external information processing apparatus; and

a control-information sending step of sending the control information stored in said control-information storage step to said external information processing apparatus in response to a request from said external information processing apparatus.

25. A recording medium for storing a computer-readable program which controls an information processing apparatus for sending and receiving an information signal to and from

an external information processing apparatus, said computer-readable program comprising:

a control-information storage step of storing control information used for writing or reading product history information which includes at least one of purchase information and repair information concerning said information processing apparatus;

a product-history storage step of storing the product history information to be updated by an instruction from said external information processing apparatus; and

a control-information sending step of sending the control information stored in said control-information storage step to said external information processing apparatus in response to a request from said external information processing apparatus.